

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 02465 111548Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
/043 W

-----079860 111607Z /45

P R 111356Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6188
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2465

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CZ
SUBJECT: HUSAK HEALTH

1. ACCORDING TO USUALLY ACCURATE ROMANIAN SOURCE, PRESIDENT HUSAK RECENTLY UNDERWENT SURGERY TO REMOVE CATARACTS. COMMENT: HUSAK HAS NOT MADE A RECORDED PUBLIC APPEARANCE SINCE AUGUST 28 AND HAS NOT RECEIVED SEVERAL DELEGATIONS HE NORMALLY WOULD HAVE, SUCH AS THE ROMANIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION LED BY POLEXCO MEMBER NICOLAE GIOSAN WHICH WAS HERE SEPTEMBER 4-8. RUMORS THAT HE REQUIRED SUCH AN OPERATION HAVE CIRCULATED SINCE AT LEAST THIS TIME LAST YEAR AND HE HAS OBVIOUSLY HAD DIFFICULTY READING SPEECHES. END COMMENT.

2. FRENCH EMBASSY HAS REVIVED THIS AND OTHER RUMORS THAT WERE PREVALENT LAST YEAR TO EFFECT THAT HUSAK IS FEELING OVERWORKED AND PLANS TO DIVEST HIMSELF OF ONE OF HIS LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS, MOST LIKELY THE GENERAL
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SECRETARYSHIP OF THE PARTY. COMMENT: IN PUBLIC APPEARANCES IN AUGUST HUSAK APPEARED IN ABUNDANT GOOD HEALTH. WE TEND TO DISCOUNT REPORTS THAT HE WILL VOLUNTARILY DIVEST HIMSELF OF ONE OF HIS JOBS. TO DO SO WOULD BREAK PRECEDENT IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD AND OPEN QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STABILITY OF THE LEADERSHIP WHICH WE BELIEVE NEITHER THIS REGIME NOR THE SOVIETS WISH RAISED, NOT TO MENTION WEAKENING HUSAK'S POSITION

IN DEALING WITH PUTATIVE RIVALS.
BYRNE

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NNN

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